

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 L-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01

SAM-01 CIEP-01 NEAE-00 /043 W

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P R 161320Z AUG 75

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2279

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0871

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ, SY

SUBJECT: IRAQ AND THE NORTHERN FRONT AGAINST ISRAEL

REF: A) FBIS AMMAN 111250Z AUGUST 75 (NOTAL)

B) FBIS AMMAN 131556Z AUGUST 75 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: WHILE CHIDING SYRIAN REGIME FOR RECENT SERIES OF BORDER INCIDENTS AND OTHER GRIEVANCES, GOI IS ENGAGING WITH SHOW OF RELISH IN PUBLIC DEBATE WITH DAMASCUS ON CREATING NEW NORTHERN FRONT AGAINST ISRAEL AND ON DEVELOPING LONG-TERM STRATEGY DESIGNED TO EXTERMINATE "THE ZIONIST ENTITY". END SUMMARY.

2. AS REPORTED REF A ALL IRAQI MEDIA ON AUGUST 11 TRUMPETED GOI NOTE PROTESTING ALLEGED STRING OF SYRIAN BORDER INCIDENTS AND PROVOCATIONS BETWEEN JULY 20 AND AUGUST 2. APPARENTLY CHOREOGRAPHED SCENARIO DESCRIBED IN IRAQI NOTE IMPLIES A SYRIAN STAGE-CRAFT SCARCELY INFERIOR TO CECIL B. DE MILLE AT HIS FINEST-- WITH MOVEMENTS OF CAMEL CORPS, MIGS AND AT LEAST ONE HUNDRED TANKS. AS ONE WESTERN AMBASSADOR OBSERVED, "THE VISUAL IMPACT
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MUST HAVE BEEN STUNNING."

3. FOR THE MOMENT, ABOVE PROVOCATIONS APPEAR FORGOTTEN BY MEDIA AS THEY NOW FOCUS ON GOI'S REPLY TO DAMASCUS'S FIVE QUESTIONS ABOUT ESTABLISHING A NORTHERN FRONT (REF B). OSTENSIBLY, GOI IS REACTING AS IF SYRIA HAS TAKEN BAGHDAD'S OVERTURES REASONABLY SERIOUSLY. THAT IS, GOI REPLY IS COUCHED IN TERMS WHICH APPEAR TO OFFER GRAIN OF HOPE THAT A BASIS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION CAN BE FOUND LEADING UP TO WEAKENING SYRIA'S PRESENT ACCEPTANCE OF A STEP BY STEP APPROACH TO PEACE WITH ISRAEL. ON THE OTHER HAND THE IRAQI NOTE IS LARDED WITH SO MANY JIBES AT SYRIA'S COWARDICE, RADICAL IDEOLOGICAL ERRORS AND ITS INABILITY TO CONCEIVE A LONG-TERM MILITARY STRATEGY AGAINST ISRAEL THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE GOI REALLY EXPECTS A MEANINGFUL DIALOG TO EMERGE. TONE OF DOCUMENT IS IN SHORT, VERY MUCH ONE OF GRANDSTANDING "FOR THE RECORD."

4. KEY FEATURES IN TERMS OF WHICH GOI CONTRASTS ITS POSITION WITH THAT OF SYRIA ARE (A) ULTIMATE PLANS FOR ISRAEL (IRAQ CLEARLY SEEKS TOTAL LIQUIDATION OF A JEWISH STATE IN PALESTINE) ACCUSES SYRIA OF WANTING TO RATIFY ISRAEL'S PRE-1967 TOPOGRAPHY; (B) TACTICAL APPROACH TO ISRAEL (IRAQ WILLING FOR ARABS TO TAKE PIECEMEAL APPROACH "LIBERATING WHATEVER CAN BE LIBERATED OF PALESTINE TERRITORY WHEN FAVORABLE CONDITIONS OFFER THEMSELVES" -- SO LONG AS ULTIMATE GOAL IS DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL; (C) NEED FOR A LONG-TERM ARAB MILITARY STRATEGY AIMED AT LIBERATING "ALL PARTS OF PALESTINIAN TERRITORY OCCUPIED BEFORE 1967"--CRITICIZING, IN THIS CONTEXT, SYRIA'S 1973 PERFORMANCE IN THE SO-CALLED "GOLAN WAR" AS AN ESSENTIALLY POINTLESS "LACKADAISICAL ARTILLERY DUEL." IN ESSENCE, IRAQ PLUMPS FOR TOTAL WARFARE ON THE BASIS OF THE ULTIMATE ELIMINATION OF A JEWISH STATE WHILE CRITICIZING SYRIA FOR WAGING LIMITED WAR ON THE BASIS OF ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL.

5. IRAQ DOES NOT APPEAR WILLING TO GIVE ITS PROPOSED ACTIVE ADHERANCE TO UNIFIED NORTHERN FRONT UNLESS SYRIA ACCEPTS IRAQ'S BASIS POLITICAL POSTURE VIS-A-VIS ISRAEL.

6. COMMENT: DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO DETECT ANY RISE IN TENSION IN BAGHDAD AS A RESULT OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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LATEST NOTE ON BORDER INCIDENTS OR ANY RISE IN EXPECTATIONS THAT GOI/SYRIAN RELATIONS WILL MELLOW AS A RESULT OF THE EXCHANGE OF NOTES ON THE NORTHERN FRONT. THE AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR FINDS TWO NATIONS' POSTURINGS DISTURBINGLY REMINISCENT OF CERTAIN FEATURES OF GERMAN-AUSTRIAN RELATIONS IN THE 1935-38 PERIOD. CLASSICISTS MIGHT, HOWEVER, DRAW A CLOSER PARALLEL WITH THE PUNIC WARS AND ESPECIALLY EARLIEST DAYS OF CATO THE ELDER'S "CARTHAGE MUST BE DESTROYED" SPEECHES IN THE ROMAN

SENATE (SURELY FEW TOOK HIM SERIOUSLY EARLY ON -- GIVEN THE THEN
BALANCE OF POWER). ONLY THE ABSENCE OF COMPROMISE LED TO THE
ORIGINALLY UNTHINKABLE DESTRUCTION OF ROME'S PUNIC RIVAL.
SIMILARLY, THE WORST POSSIBLE REBUKE TO THE IRAQI POSITION
WOULD BE CONTINUING, DRAMATIC SUCCESS OF THE CURRENT STEP-
BY-STEP APPROACH TO LIMITED GOALS BY THE MAJOR ANTAGONISTS,
BASED ON THEIR HOPEFULLY GROWING CONVICTION THAT THE BALANCE
OF POWER PRECLUDES SOLUTIONS TOTALLY TO ANYONE'S LIKING.
MEANWHILE, IRAQ REMAINS DEFIANT IN ITS STAND OF CATO-LIKE
ABSOLUTE OPPOSITION. IF THE LIMITED APPROACH FAILS, IRAQ
WILL ALWAYS BE ABLE TO SAY "I TOLD YOU SO." MEANWHILE, IF
IRAQ CAN POSSIBLY LAY ITS HAND ON A STRATEGEM FOR SLOWING
DOWN OR HALTING THE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH, IT CAN SURELY
BE COUNTED UPON TO DO SO.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, ALLIANCE, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BAGHDA00871
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750284-0241
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750845/aaaabmyv.tel
Line Count: 130
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 JUN 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <09 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IRAQ AND THE NORTHERN FRONT AGAINST ISRAEL
TAGS: PFOR, IZ, SY, IS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006